

From: Daniel Harrington
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 7:01pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am writing this letter to express my concern for what appears to be the lenient treatment of Microsoft resulting from the anti-trust trial. As an intentional user of non-Microsoft software, I find that the company continues to exercise its influence over software acceptance in virtually every arena, and this activity continues blatantly, even after the findings from the anti-trust trial.

The recent release of the Windows Media format (predominantly post-trial) provides an excellent example of how pre-trial behavior continues unchecked. Just a few years ago, Apple's Quicktime was the predominant multimedia format. This was followed soon afterwards by streaming solutions by companies like Real. The Microsoft analogue, Windows Media format, has been available for a comparatively short time, and yet has drawn quick acceptance, primarily due to its rampant availability. Testimony from the trial shows that this sort of activity was planned, and one can see from the dominance of Internet Explorer that similar results are inevitable in the multimedia realm without some sort of intervention.

Microsoft has become a monopoly. Definitive steps must be taken to check their influence on the software industry and allow for competition in this realm. I would encourage that steps be taken to even the playing field, with less concern to the effects that such steps might have on Windows users as a whole. While appropriate measures might have short-term negative effects on the company and the nation, these temporary issues should only be seen as direct results of the monopoly itself -- and as beneficial steps in the long run.

The nation's attention to this issue is clearly an indication of how important it has become. Similarly, the outcry from non-Windows users should provide some sense of how fragile their futures may feel under the threat of a company like Microsoft. Marginalization happens easily and quickly in the software industry (note companies like Lotus and their 1-2-3 spreadsheet and Ami word processor, former competitors and leaders in their respective fields). Please move quickly to preserve an open arena for large and small software companies alike.

Sincerely,

Daniel Harrington